METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF KNOWSLEY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

APPLICATION N0: 01/00511/COU

DEVELOPMENT:

CHANGE OF USE OF FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS FROM OFFICES/STORAGE TO 4 NO. 2 BEDROOMED SELF-CONTAINED FLATS.

LOCATION OF SITE AND APPLICANT:

Royal Liver Assurance Ltd 1 Chapel Street Prescot Knowsley L34 5QR, Dr M.B, Mr J.M, Mr D.L Bennett

WARD AFFECTED: Prescot West

KNOWSLEY UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (Adopted June 1998) – Town Centre within a Conservation Area.

CONSULTATIONS:

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS:

Chief Environmental Health Officer - No objections in principle.
Transportation and Engineering Services Division - No objections.
Merseyside Police - No observations received.
Prescot Town Council - No objections.

NEIGHBOUR CONSULTATIONS:

The application has been advertised by way of a site and press notice. In addition, the occupiers of 18 surrounding properties have been notified of the proposal by letter. No observations have been received as a result of this publicity.

REPORT:

The application relates to the first and second floor levels above existing vacant units, previously used for retail use (Class A1) located at the junction of Chapel Street and Eccleston Street, Prescot. The previous uses of the first and second floors were storage and offices.

The current application proposes the change of use of the former stores and offices to form 4 no. two bedroomed self-contained flats. Access to the flats would be via an existing entrance door located at ground floor level off Chapel Street. The development would involve only minor alterations to the external appearance of the building which would comprise alterations to the windows to the rear elevation.

In accordance with the terms of Policy T12 of the Unitary Development Plan, 6 no. car parking spaces would be required for 4 no. flats. The current proposal indicates that 3 no. car parking spaces can be obtained alongside the building in an area accessed off Chapel Street. Parking restrictions currently exist both along Chapel Street and Eccleston Street. Current Government guidance suggests that housing in and near to city, town and district centres within existing urban areas, including through conversion should be encouraged. The key planning objective is to ensure that jobs, shopping and services are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The site is located within Prescot Town Centre and therefore is accessible to a variety of modes of transport. The application site is also in close proximity to a number of Town Centre car parks. In particular a public car park is located on the opposite side of Eccleston Street, approximately 30 m away.

Central Government Guidance contained within PPG3 - Housing stresses that cart parking standards for housing have become increasingly demanding and have been applied too rigidly, often as minimum standards. Developers should not be required to provide more car parking than they or potential occupiers might want, nor to provide off-street parking when there is no need, particularly in urban areas where public transport is available or where there is a demand for car-free housing. PPG13 - Transport further advocates the reduction of the amount of parking in new development (and in the expansion and change of use in existing development)and considers that it is essential, as part of a package of planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable travel choices.

Turning to the residential amenities of future occupiers of the flats, the Chief Environmental Health Officer has been consulted and considers that the internal layout is well designed both in vertical and horizontal layout of rooms. As the previous upper floors were used for storage/office accommodation, then the provisions of Part E of the Building Regulations would apply. This would cover the provision of adequate sound insulation both between the proposed dwellings and the units below and therefore no planning conditions would be needed to protect the residential amenity of future occupiers of the proposed flats.

Bringing residential use into the urban core can help sustain urban population and also attract people into the area. Conversion of the upper floors of these premises would bring an under used building into use, and help to increase the population, helping to support local businesses and thus greater activity would be generated in Prescot Town Centre at all times of the day.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 advises that conversions of housing, buildings formerly in other uses and the upper floor space over shops, can provide an important source of additional housing, particularly in town centres. It further advises that Local Planning Authorities should promote such conversions, by taking a more flexible approach to development plan standards with regard to densities, car parking, amenity space and overlooking.

By re-using the upper floors of these premises, the building would be of mixed-use ie; retail and residential. Within town centres, mixed-use development can help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel. PPG1 - General Policies and Principles encourages Local Authorities to promote and retain mix uses, particularly in town centres, in other areas highly accessible by means of transport, other than private car and in areas of major new development.

In terms of the property's location within the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area, it is not considered that the minor alterations to the rear elevation would have a detrimental affect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and as such the proposal would comply with Policy En9 of the UDP.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted.

1. No part of the development hereby granted permission shall be commenced until samples of all facing brickwork to be used in the development have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out using only the agreed brickwork.

   Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the character and appearance of the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area and to comply with Policy En9 of the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan as adopted June 1998.

2. Any windows to be formed or altered in connection with the proposed development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing beforehand by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area and to comply with Policy En9 of the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan as adopted June 1998.

18.10.01
Agreed Date

[redacted]
Director Of Planning And Development

In consultation with:

[redacted]
Chairman/Vice-Chairman, Planning Committee